

Tax Law

§ 496-a. Returns to be secret. (a) Except in accordance with proper judicial order or as in this section or otherwise provided by law, it shall be unlawful for the commissioner, any officer or employee of the department, or any officer or person who, pursuant to this section, is permitted to inspect any return or report or to whom a copy, an abstract or a portion of any return or report is furnished, or to whom any information contained in any return or report is furnished, or any person who in any manner may acquire knowledge of the contents of a return or report filed pursuant to this article to divulge or make known in any manner the content or any other information contained in any return or report required under this article. The officers charged with the custody of such returns or reports shall not be required to produce any of them or evidence of anything contained in them in any action or proceeding in any court, except on behalf of the state, the office of cannabis management, or the commissioner in an action or proceeding involving the collection of tax due under this chapter to which the state or the commissioner is a party or a claimant or on behalf of any party to any action or proceeding under the provisions of this article, when the returns or the reports or the facts shown thereby are directly involved in such action or proceeding, or in an action or proceeding related to the regulation or taxation of adult-use cannabis products on behalf of officers to whom information shall have been supplied as provided in this section, in any of which events the court may require the production of, and may admit in evidence so much of said returns or reports or of the facts shown thereby as are pertinent to the action or proceeding and no more. Nothing herein shall be construed to prohibit the commissioner, in his or her discretion, from allowing the inspection or delivery of a certified copy of any return or report filed under this article or of any information contained in any such return or report by or to a duly authorized officer or employee of the office of cannabis management; or by or to the attorney general or other legal representatives of the state when an action shall have been recommended or commenced pursuant to this chapter in which such returns or reports or the facts shown thereby are directly involved; or the inspection of the returns or reports required under this article by the comptroller or duly designated officer or employee of the state department of audit and control, for purposes of the audit of a refund of any tax paid by any person under this article; nor to prohibit the delivery to such person or a duly authorized representative of such person, a certified copy of any return or report filed by such person pursuant to this article, nor to prohibit the publication of statistics so classified as to prevent the identification of particular returns or reports and the items thereof. This section shall also not be construed to prohibit the disclosure, for tax administration purposes, to the division of the budget and the office of the state comptroller, of information aggregated from the returns filed by all persons subject to the taxes imposed by the article, whether the number of such persons is one or more. Provided further that, notwithstanding the provisions of this subdivision, the commissioner may, in his or her discretion, permit the proper officer of any county entitled to receive any distribution of the monies received on account of the tax imposed by subdivision (c) of section four hundred ninety-three of this article, or the authorized representative of such officer, to inspect any return filed under this article, or may furnish to such officer or the officer's authorized representative an abstract of any such return or supply such officer or

representative with information concerning an item contained in any such return, or disclosed by any investigation of tax liability under this article.

(b) The commissioner, in his or her discretion, may permit the appropriate officers of any other state that regulates or taxes cannabis or the duly authorized representatives of any such officers, to inspect returns or reports made pursuant to this article, or may furnish to such other officers, or their duly authorized representatives, a copy of any such return or report or an abstract of the information therein contained, or any portion thereof, or may supply any such officers or such representatives with information relating to the business of a person making returns or reports hereunder solely for purposes of tax administration. The commissioner may refuse to supply information pursuant to this subdivision to the officers of any other state if the statutes of the state represented by such officers do not grant substantially similar privileges to the commissioner, but such refusal shall not be mandatory. Information shall not be supplied to the officers of any state that regulates or taxes cannabis, or their duly authorized representatives of any such officers, unless such officer or other representatives shall agree not to divulge or make known in any manner the information so supplied, but such officers may transmit such information to their employees or legal representatives when necessary, who in turn shall be subject to the same restrictions as those hereby imposed upon such officer or other representatives.

(c) (1) Any officer or employee of the state who willfully violates the provisions of subdivision (a) or (b) of this section shall be dismissed from office and be incapable of holding any public office in this state for a period of five years thereafter.

(2) For criminal penalties, see article thirty-seven of this chapter.